Source:
Letter to CSLC Commission

Date: 12/20/04

2004/S012

S012-1
Thank you for the information.

Coastal Conservancy

Cy Oggins
California State Lands Commission
100 Howe Ave., Suite 100-South
Sacramento, CA 95825-8202 ogginsc@slc.ca.gov

Fax (916) 574-1885

Subject: Comments on draft EIR/EIS for Cabrillo Port Liquefied Natural Gas Deepwater Port, Ventura County. State Clearinghouse number 2004021107.

Dear Mr. Oggins:

The State Coastal Conservancy offers these brief comments on the subject draft EIR. As is widely known, the Conservancy is leading a major coastal wetland restoration project with numerous partners in the Ormond Beach area of Oxnard. We own 265 acres at Ormond Beach and are actively acquiring more adjoining properties. Our comments here are limited to elements of the draft EIR that pertain only to the Ormond Beach area.

The Conservancy's Ormond Beach project area generally surrounds the Reliant electric generating station and the "Center Road" pipeline route of the proposed Cabrillo Port project. The Center Road pipeline route appears to be the preferred project alternative in the draft EIR. The Arnold Road pipeline and Caspar Road pipeline alternatives also cross a portion of our Ormond Beach Wetland Restoration Study area. Therefore, the Cabrillo Port project could have direct and indirect impacts on our wetland restoration project. S012-1

Because the Conservancy is not a regulatory or law enforcement agency, our comments are intended only to help with completing the technical details of the EIR and to assist its reviewers, other agencies, and the interested public. We look to the other State agencies with a regulatory or legal responsibility, such as California Coastal Commission, Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, and/or California Department of Fish and Game, to comment about the adequacy of the EIR and its analyses pursuant to CEQA.

To help with revisions to the EIR and future coordination on the proposed Cabrillo Port project, attached for reference are recent Conservancy documents that provide an updated description of the Ormond Beach area and our project there, generally in more detail and with more recent information than in the draft EIR. Also attached is an aerial photo exhibit and a description of our wetland restoration study and land preservation efforts now underway in an approximate 1000-acre study

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area at Ormond Beach. These references include an original Conservancy staff report from August 2003 and a public outreach newsletter (*Wetlands Watcher*) from summer 2003. S012-1 (cont'd)

Collectively, these attached references include material that can fill in gaps or supplement older information in several sections of the EIR about biological and other resources of the Ormond Beach area. In addition, the EIR descriptions can be updated on pages 4.7-11, 4.8-11, and 4.13-12 about the Conservancy activities and plans for the area, especially to acknowledge all of the land area and parcels now anticipated for preservation and restoration. S012-2 To illustrate the wetland restoration plans concisely, the final EIR should include a map exhibit that shows the latest status (in mid 2005) of the Conservancy's conceptual plans for the Ormond Beach area. S012-3

We also offer the following specific –although hardly exhaustive– comments on the draft EIR.

Figure 4.8-3: The USGS base map in this figure was made in 1964 and is woefully obsolete for the Ormond Beach area, showing duck ponds instead of the electric generating station and adjacent oil tank farm. S012-4 A contemporary aerial photo exhibit should be used instead as the base for this figure.

Page 4.8-11: The delineation of existing wetlands also should include a wetland delineation pursuant to applicable California Coastal Commission delineation methods and not just the Federal Corps of Engineers delineation method. S012-5

Page 4.8-12: The threshold of what defines a Special Status species needs to be described. S012-6 The special status plant species in the draft EIR appear to be based only on reports from CNDDB, which typically only reports data 4 years or more old. A moderately rare native dune plant, *Abronia maritima* (red sand verbena) is scattered throughout the dunes at Ormond Beach. S012-7 This plant is listed by CDFG as a 'special concern' species and by CNPS as category 4 species, and also could be considered a Special Status species in the EIR. The Conservancy is interested in expanding the population of this rare plant throughout the dunes near the beginning of the Center Road pipeline, so an analysis elsewhere in the EIR should describe existing conditions at these dunes and potential impacts by the proposed project. Of particular interest (for other sections of the EIR) is the specific S012-8 depth of horizontal directional drilling (HDD) and an estimate of beach and dune elevational changes from year to year and spanning the life of the proposed Cabrillo Port project.

Page 4.8-58: The descriptions of biological resources for the Arnold Road pipeline and the Casper Road pipeline likely are similar to the resources on the beach at the Center Road pipeline route, and might be a basis for a description of biological resources that seems to be missing for the dunes at the Center Road pipeline area. S012-9 *Abronia maritima* also is mentioned, although misspelled, on this page.

Page 4.8-60: Line 11 needs to complete the spelling of the reference source named. S012-10

Page 1-23: In Table 1.6-1 and elsewhere in the EIR, a more detailed description would be helpful about how HDD may or may not be used, and at what depth, around the existing remnant wetland S012-11 and drainage ditch at the north edge of Reliant station. As part of the Conservancy's wetland restoration plan to be completed in 2005, this drainage ditch could be planned for widening and deepening substantially to become a restored tidal channel that hydrologically links wetland zones on either side of Edison Drive.

S012-2
As described in Section 2.3.2, the shore crossing would be installed beneath Ormond Beach. Sections 4.8.1 and 4.14.1.2 discuss Ormond Beach wetlands. Section 4.8.4 discusses mitigation measures to minimize impacts on wetlands. The presence of the pipelines under Ormond Beach would not restrict access to the area for recreation or otherwise alter recreation opportunities at Ormond Beach. During construction, the horizontal directional boring activities would be contained within the Reliant Energy property, and the pipeline would be buried underneath the beach. This topic is discussed further in Sections 4.15.4 and 4.2.8.4. Updated information about the restoration efforts at Ormond Beach is included in Section 4.13.2. Figure 4.13-1 has been revised.

S012-3
Figure 4.13-1 illustrates the Ormond Beach wetlands restoration project area.

S012-4
Figure 4.8-3A provides an updated aerial photo of the area.

S012-5
As stated in Section 4.8.1, wetlands within the coastal zone were delineated using California Coastal Commission and California Department of Fish and Game wetland definitions.

S012-6
Section 4.8.1 has been revised in response to the comment.

S012-7
Tables 4.8-3a and 4.8-5 identify red sand verbena (abronia maritima) as potentially occurring and found in the Project area.

S012-8
Table 4.8-5 lists this species as found during plant surveys of the areas of the proposed pipeline and alternatives. Section 2.6.1 discusses the shore crossing methods and depths. During construction, the horizontal directional boring activities would be contained within the Reliant Energy property, and the pipeline would be buried underneath the beach. Beach and dune elevational changes for the life of the proposed Project would be driven by natural events rather than the temporary effects of pipeline installation and are not discussed in this EIS/EIR because such are not impacts of the proposed Project.

S012-9
The text in Section 4.8.1 has been revised in response to the

comment.

S012-10
This reference has been deleted from the Final EIS/EIR because other sources were used.

S012-11
The Project has been modified, and pipelines would be installed beneath the shore using horizontal directional boring (HDB). Section 2.3.2 contains information on this topic.

In conclusion, according to the schedule, detailed planning to revise the EIR or prepare a final EIR for the proposed Cabrillo Port project may be happening in late 2005. The Conservancy's wetland restoration feasibility plan for the 1000-acre study area at Ormond Beach (see attached maps and references) is planned for completion at approximately the same time. To avoid conflicts and assure compatibility, planners and agencies involved with the proposed Cabrillo Port project should coordinate closely with the Conservancy and our project design team. We have a forum already established for such coordination and communication through Ormond Beach Task Force. This group of diverse stakeholders meets bimonthly in Oxnard and can be a venue for communicating efficiently with many parties interested in the Ormond Beach area.

S012-12

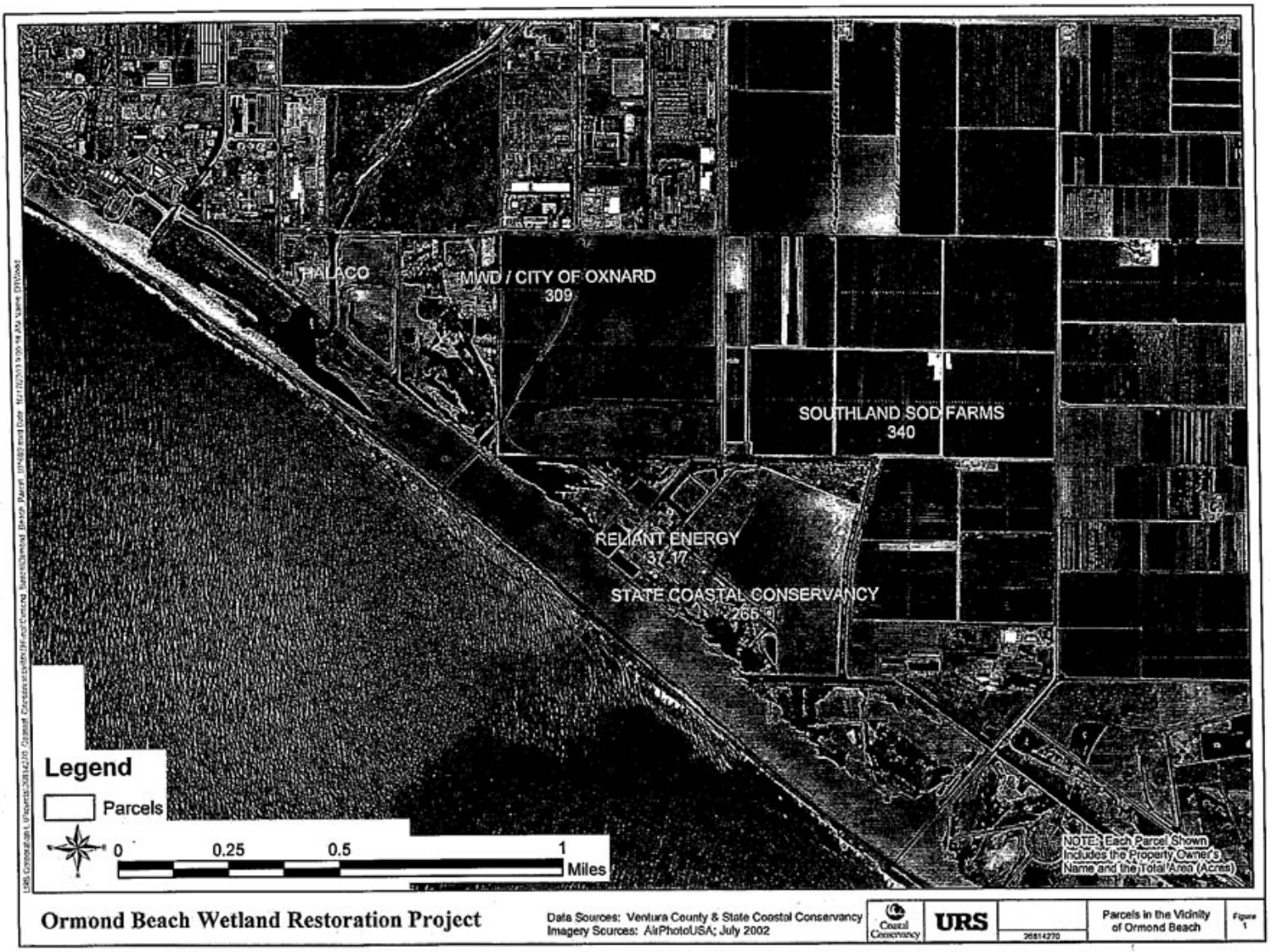
Please continue to contact me directly as the Conservancy's primary point of contact. Telephone: (510) 286 4162. Email: brand@scc.ca.gov. If I am not readily available, also feel free to contact our local consulting wetland scientist, David Pritchett, for assistance with some technical issues and local logistics about the Ormond Beach project. Mr. Pritchett is available at telephone (805) 403-8830 and email dapritch@cox.net.

Sincerely,

Peter S. Brand
Senior Project Manager

TOTAL P.03

S012-12
Thank you for the information.



Ormond Beach Wetland Restoration Project

Data Sources: Ventura County & State Coastal Conservancy
Imagery Sources: AirPhotoUSA; July 2002

Coastal Conservancy | URS | 26814270 | Parcels in the Vicinity of Ormond Beach | Figure 1

2004/S012

Coastal Conservancy

STATE COASTAL CONSERVANCY

ORMOND BEACH WETLANDS RESTORATION PROJECT

With the unanimous support of the Oxnard City Council and the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, the State Coastal Conservancy has taken the following steps at Ormond Beach:

1. Acquired 265 acres of wetlands (and former wetlands), beach, and dunes from Southern California Edison;
2. Reached agreement at the staff level with the Metropolitan Water District and the City of Oxnard on purchase of the 276 acres they own adjoining the above property;
3. Reserved funding for acquisition of an additional 210 acres from another willing seller; and
4. Begun a year-long study of various wetland restoration options at Ormond Beach and its adjoining wetlands.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY:

Ormond Beach is a 1,500-acre area composed of agriculture, industry, and wetlands. A two-mile-long beach extends from Port Hueneme to the northwestern boundary of Pt. Mugu Naval Air Station, which encompasses Mugu Lagoon.

Prior to development, the coast of Ventura was a vast complex of dunes, lakes, lagoons, and salt and freshwater marshes. From the Santa Clara River estuary to the beginning of Mugu Lagoon, it appears from historic maps that there were seven lagoons. Most have either disappeared, been severely degraded, or been converted to marinas or ports. Nevertheless, this is one of the few areas in southern California with an intact dune-transition zone–marsh system. Over 200 migratory bird species are reported for the Ormond Beach area, and more shorebird species are known to use Ormond Beach than any other site in Ventura County. Six threatened and endangered species and six species of concern have been identified on the former Edison site.

The Ormond Beach wetlands have been drained, filled, and degraded over the past century to accommodate agriculture and industrial uses. The wetlands at Ormond Beach once covered approximately 1,000 acres; approximately 250 acres remain. The lagoons have been used as a city dump, developed with a magnesium smelting plant and with the electrical generating plant, and drained for agriculture. Drainage and developments, including the naval air station, have left the Ormond Beach wetlands hydrologically isolated and significantly reduced in size. The remaining wetlands on site are degraded from compaction due to human use and dumping, contaminated from runoff, and suffering from hypersalinity due to lack of flushing.

For the last three decades, there have been numerous proposals for marinas, resorts, and residences in and adjoining the remnant wetlands. Each of the development proposals for Ormond Beach failed. During the 1990s, the Conservancy worked with the City, the community, and the landowners of Ormond Beach to extinguish lots on the beach, prepare a plan for restoration of the remnant wetlands on the Edison property, and develop a consensus plan for development and wetland restoration on the private lands there.

PROJECT GOAL

Ormond Beach is considered by wetland experts to be the most important wetland restoration opportunity in southern California. The biological significance of this area has been recognized and its restoration potential endorsed by all of the federal and state resource agencies that participate in the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project. With their support and the support of the County of Ventura and the City of Oxnard, the Conservancy has begun acquisition at Ormond Beach with a goal of acquiring at least 750 acres to accommodate wetland and other habitat needs and at the same time complement the City's goal to complete development of the south Oxnard community. Acquisition and restoration of these properties could at least triple the extent of habitat at Ormond Beach

A critical mass of 750 acres of restored wetlands and associated habitat at Ormond Beach is expected to create a self-sustaining biological system and enough tidal prism and flushing action to maintain health and hydrologic function. Anticipated restoration at Ormond Beach would include modifications of the site hydrology to restore tidal action and bring back freshwater flows that had formerly drained across the Oxnard Plain to the coastal wetlands. When integrated with the adjoining 900 acres of freshwater wetlands and the 1,500 acres at Mugu Lagoon, this could be the largest coastal wetland in southern California, spanning nine miles of the coast from Point Hueneme to Point Mugu.

PROJECT STATUS

In June 2002, the Conservancy acquired the first property, 265 acres including a former oil tank farm site, from Southern California Edison. The Conservancy at its October 2003 meeting reserved funds for acquisition of the additional 500 acres as proposed. The City of Oxnard and the Metropolitan Water District are co-owners of the adjoining 309 acres. The City still owes MWD for most of the cost of acquisition. The Oxnard City Council has voted to endorse the sale of the property to the Conservancy. MWD has passed a resolution unanimously authorizing staff to negotiate a sale of the property to the Conservancy. Negotiations are underway and staff of all parties are in agreement on the sale terms. All parties have been negotiating on the assumption that two pieces of the property would be excluded from the sale – (1) the northwest corner of the property, which adjoins a paper recycling plant owned by Weyerhauser Corporation, which they would like to buy for a storage site and (2) a 20-acre piece that MWD would like to reserve for a potential desalination plant that they may want to build in the future. Therefore the proposed acquisition is 276 acres.

The Conservancy has also reserved funds for the acquisition of the adjoining 210 acres of former wetlands that are currently owned and farmed by Southland Sod. The owner has since offered to sell all of the 340-acre former Edison property to the Conservancy conditioned upon his purchase of other suitable agricultural land where he can transfer his operations. One option at this time is to acquire 210 acres and an agricultural conservation easement over the balance of the property.

The Conservancy has begun a restoration feasibility study for Ormond Beach and adjoining wetlands that would show how this area could be restored and linked hydrologically and as an ecosystem. The study will develop recommendations that address habitat needs of the coastal landscape ecosystem, habitat needs of special status species, water supply and quality issues, mitigation of contaminants, wetland restoration alternatives, priority and timing of restoration activities, public access and interpretive center opportunities, and costs for restoration and management.

Peter S. Brand, Project Manager (510) 286 4162 August 6, 2004

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Project Summary
August 14, 2003

ORMOND BEACH: WETLAND RESTORATION FEASIBILITY STUDY

File No. 90-048
Project Manager: Peter S. Brand

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to $600,000 for consultant services to prepare a wetland restoration feasibility study for Ormond Beach.

LOCATION: City of Oxnard, Ventura County (Exhibit 1)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Resource Enhancement

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following Resolution pursuant to Sections 31104, 31111, and 31251 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

"The State Coastal Conservancy authorizes disbursement of an amount not to exceed six hundred thousand dollars ($600,000) for consultant services to undertake planning and feasibility studies for wetland restoration at Ormond Beach.

The State Coastal Conservancy further authorizes the expenditure of funds from a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant and other sources to defray or reimburse the Conservancy's costs of planning for the Ormond Beach property."

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

"Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the purposes and criteria of Chapter 6 of the Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Sections 31251-31270) regarding enhancement of coastal resources, and the authority of the Conservancy under Section 31111 to undertake plans and feasibility studies to implement Division 21.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.
3. The Conservancy is authorized under Section 31104 of the Public Resources Code to apply for and accept financial federal grants and other financial support from public and private sources."

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Conservancy authorize disbursement of $600,000 of Conservancy and federal funds for the preparation of hydrologic and biological plans and feasibility studies for the potential restoration of coastal wetlands, dunes and associated uplands at Ormond Beach (Exhibit 2).

The biological significance of this area has been recognized and its restoration potential endorsed by all of the federal and state resource agencies that participate in the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project. With their support and the support of the County of Ventura and the City of Oxnard, the Conservancy has begun acquisition at Ormond Beach with a goal of acquiring at least 750 acres to accommodate wetland and other habitat needs and at the same time complement the City's goal to complete development of the south Oxnard community.

In June 2002, the Conservancy acquired the first property, 265 acres including a former tank farm site, from Southern California Edison (Exhibit 3). The Conservancy is currently negotiating with the City of Oxnard and the Metropolitan Water District, co-owners of the adjoining 309 acres, who would like to sell most of their property to the Conservancy (Exhibit 4). Several private landowners in the area have also offered to negotiate a sale that would contribute to the project. Acquisition and restoration of these properties could at least triple the extent of habitat in the acquisition area and assist the land managers of the Point Mugu wetlands and duck clubs in restoring and enhancing their properties.

A critical mass of 750 acres of restored wetlands and associated habitat at Ormond Beach is expected to create a self-sustaining biological system and enough tidal prism and flushing action to maintain health and hydrologic function. Anticipated restoration at Ormond Beach would include modifications of the site hydrology to restore tidal action and bring back freshwater flows that had formerly drained across the Oxnard Plain to the coastal wetlands. When integrated with the adjoining 900 acres of freshwater wetlands and the 1,500 acres at Mugu Lagoon, this could be the largest coastal wetland in southern California, spanning nine miles of the coast from Point Hueneme to Point Mugu.

The feasibility studies and plans represent the first phase in a lengthy, iterative planning and design process. The Coastal Conservancy has solicited proposals from consultant teams, primarily biologists and hydrologists, interested in a wetland restoration feasibility study for Ormond Beach in Ventura County. The proposed budget is based on a variety of competing proposals submitted by experts in the field and is sufficient for a feasibility study for this complex area.

The proposed restoration feasibility study will develop recommendations that address habitat needs of the coastal landscape ecosystem, habitat needs of special status species, water supply and quality issues, mitigation of contaminants, wetland restoration alternatives, priority and timing of restoration activities, public access and interpretive center opportunities, and costs for restoration and management. It is not intended to propose and adopt the final solution for wetland and associated habitats to be constructed at Ormond Beach but instead to consider the ultimate design, anticipate the environmental impacts of different alternatives, and propose near-term enhancement that could be implemented in the near future without compromising the larger project. The studies would assist the Conservancy and its partners in determining the potential scope, conceptual design, feasibility, timing, and funding needed for implementation and to provide the City of Oxnard and adjoining landowners as clear as possible a vision of the restoration goal and an expectation of its implementation.

Over the last few decades, numerous studies and a few site restoration plans have been undertaken for the Ormond Beach area. These plans have dealt with a variety of issues: enhancement of existing wetland habitat, flood control, sand loss, seawater intrusion, wetland delineation, land use, water quality, and soil contamination. However, most of these plans have dealt with single issues or single sites. None of them have been comprehensive and none of them have dealt with the scope of lands that are being acquired for restoration or adjoining properties that might be integrated into the proposed wetland restoration plans such as the Mugu wetlands complex.

Site Description: Prior to development, the coast of Ventura was a vast complex of dunes, lakes, lagoons, and salt and freshwater marshes. From the Santa Clara River estuary to the beginning of Mugu Lagoon, it appears from historic maps that there were seven lagoons. Most have either disappeared, been severely degraded, or been converted to marinas or ports. Nevertheless, this is one of the few areas in southern California with an intact dune-transition zone–marsh system.

Ormond Beach is a 1,500-acre area composed of agriculture, industry, and wetlands. A two-mile-long beach extends from Port Hueneme to the northwestern boundary of Pt. Mugu Naval Air Station, which encompasses Mugu Lagoon.

The Ormond Beach wetlands historically were part of a salt marsh and brackish water lagoon and dune system. These lagoons were located behind a narrow sandy barrier beach of low dunes and fed by water from creeks and surface flow over the plain, and inundated by salt water during high tides or storms. Periodically, the barrier beach was breached by floodwaters and the action of winter storm waves. Some of the lagoons likely remained open to the ocean for a period after the breaching event. Tidal connections have likely always been muted. The site probably received most of its water as runoff from inland sources and from the site's high water table.

The wetlands at Ormond Beach once covered approximately 1,000 acres (Exhibit 5); approximately 250 acres remain. All of the remaining wetlands are within the city's incorporated boundary. Approximately half are on the Edison site and half on the adjoining 309-acre property owned by the City of Oxnard and the Metropolitan Water District.

The lagoons of Ormond Beach have been used as a city dump, developed with a magnesium smelting plant and with the electrical generating plant, and drained for agriculture. Drainage and developments, including the naval air station, have left the Ormond Beach wetlands hydrologically isolated and significantly reduced in size. The remaining wetlands on site are degraded from compaction due to human use and dumping, contaminated from runoff, and suffering from hypersalinity due to lack of flushing.

Wetland types at the Edison site include seasonally inundated brackish and freshwater marshes, and isolated (formerly tidal) salt marshes. Open beach and coastal dune ecosystems also are present. Endangered and threatened species at the site include western snowy plover, California least tern, brown pelican, Belding's savannah sparrow, tidewater goby, and salt marsh bird's-beak (an annual plant). Light-footed clapper rail also occurs in nearby salt marsh habitat of Mugu Lagoon. Many other sensitive species also are present, such as globose dune beetle, spiny rush, and red sand-verbena. More than 200 migratory bird species are reported for the Ormond Beach and Mugu Lagoon wetland complex, and more shorebird species are known there than any other site in Ventura County.

Ormond Beach is considered by wetland experts to be the most important wetland restoration opportunity in southern California. Over 200 migratory bird species are reported for the Ormond Beach area, and more shorebird species are known to use Ormond Beach than any other site in

Ventura County. Six threatened and endangered species and six species of concern have been identified on the Edison site.

The Ormond Beach wetlands offer a unique opportunity in the highly developed landscape of southern California to not just enhance but also greatly increase coastal wetlands. In addition, the biological vitality and diversity of the wetlands can be enhanced at Ormond Beach by the restoration of associated habitat such as dunes and surrounding grasslands, which will re-establish wetland-upland ecological connections, fostering edge-dependent species and predator-prey relationships and thereby creating a self sustaining system. Because of conversion to urban uses, no other coastal wetland in southern California offers the opportunity that exists here to restore the wetland to most of its historic extent or surround it with its full complementary habitat.

Project History: The Ormond Beach wetlands have been drained, filled, and degraded over the past century to accommodate agriculture and industrial uses. For the last three decades, there have been numerous proposals for marinas, resorts, and residences in and adjoining the remnant wetlands. During the 1990s, the Conservancy worked with the City, the community, and the landowners of Ormond Beach to extinguish lots on the beach, prepare a plan for restoration of the remnant wetlands on the Edison property, and develop a consensus plan for development and wetland restoration on the private lands there. Each of the development proposals for Ormond Beach failed.

In October 1999, the Conservancy proposed to Southern California Edison that it acquire their surplus lands remaining after sale of their Ormond Beach generating plant to Reliant Energy. Edison entered into and terminated negotiations with the Conservancy twice during this period. The Conservancy finally acquired the 265-acre property in June of 2002.

In February 2000 when the Conservancy initially approved the acquisition of Edison properties, it also approved the Wetland Resources Enhancement Plan for Southern California Edison Coastal Properties, including Ormond Beach, which identifies the opportunities for preservation and restoration of these coastal resources. The Enhancement Plan indicates the presence of important resource preservation and restoration opportunities on the property and the surrounding area , recommends acquisition of the property and detailed planning for wetland restoration, and proposes appropriate long-term management scenarios to follow actual restoration.

Staff has prepared a work program for a wetland restoration study that would show how this area could be restored and linked hydrologically and as an ecosystem. Given the complexities of wetland restoration planning for this and adjoining sites, the Conservancy will require some time to complete all of the planning, environmental analysis, and other requirements that are needed to construct the wetlands.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy	$525,000
U.S. EPA	75,000
Total Project Cost:	**$600,000**

The anticipated source of Conservancy funds is the Habitat Conservation Fund. The project will help implement several purposes of the Habitat Conservation Fund including the acquisition and restoration of wetland and endangered species habitat. The E.P.A. grant was awarded under their Coastal Wetlands Protection Development Grant program. This program requires a non-federal

match of at least 25 percent. The total grant from E.P.A. is $125,000 with $75,000 allocated to consultant studies and the balance for staff support costs.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

This project would be undertaken pursuant to the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code; in particular Chapter 6 (Public Resources Code Sections 31251-31270). In approving the Wetland Resources Enhancement Plan for Southern California Edison Properties, , which calls for further detailed restoration planning for the Ormond Beach area, the Conservancy determined on February 24, 2000 that the project was consistent with the purposes and criteria set forth in Chapter 6, and with the Conservancy's interim Program Guidelines, adopted May 27, 1999. The project as now recommended remains consistent with these findings.

Consistent with Section 31253, the level of Conservancy funding for this project has been determined through consideration of the total amount of funding available for coastal resource projects, the relative urgency of the project, and other factors including the availability of federal funding for this planning effort.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

Consistent with **Goal 4, Objective A**, the project will plan for conservation of natural communities and scenic and recreational resources in order to acquire significant coastal resource properties.

Consistent with **Goal 5, Objective A**, the project will plan for the preservation and restoration of coastal wetlands and dunes.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted January 24, 2001, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** The project to acquire the Edison property and to pursue eventual restoration as proposed under the Enhancement Plan was supported by the federal and state resource agencies, the County Board of Supervisors and the Oxnard City Council, environmental and other special interest groups, and local residents including: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Navy Mugu Naval Air Station, Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project, State Department of Fish and Game, State Regional Water Quality Control Board, Environmental Defense Center, Calleguas Municipal Water District, Ventura Audubon Society, Conejo Valley Audubon Society, Channel Islands Council of Divers, California

Native Plant Society, Friends of the Santa Clara River, The Beacon Foundation, Oxnard Beautiful, Willamette Industries, Surfrider Foundation, and the Santa Barbara Channelkeeper. Senator Sheila Kuehl, Assemblymember Fran Pavley, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors and the Oxnard City Council also recently wrote letters to the Metropolitan Water District supporting the sale of their land to the Coastal Conservancy (Exhibit 6) Additional letters from these and other groups supporting the proposed study will be provided.

4. **Location:** Most of the geographic scope of the study is within the coastal zone. Those non coastal zone areas being considered for habitat restoration in the study will benefit the coastal wetlands in the zone.

5. **Need:** Coastal Conservancy assistance is needed to coordinate restoration planning for Ormond Beach. The Conservancy acquired the Edison property in order to preserve and restore its wetlands and to support a larger restoration effort. No other agency, except for E.P.A., has funding available for this plan.

6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The project is supported by the federal and state resource agencies, environmental and other special interest groups. The Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project has specifically endorsed the acquisition and restoration of the Ormond Beach wetlands

Additional Criteria

8. **Resolution of more than one issue:** Wetland enhancement and restoration will help resolve problems of flooding and degraded water quality on the sites. Once restored, the property may also include new trails and recreational opportunities.

9. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above.

10. **Conflict resolution:** Acquisition and eventual restoration of the Ormond Beach property will resolve issues that have resulted in many years of land use conflicts.

12. **Readiness:** Upon funding authorization and negotiation of a consultant contract, the project is expected to take fourteen months..

15. **Cooperation:** Local environmental and community groups have been working with the Conservancy for many years to support preservation and restoration of these properties and are expected to continue to do so. The Conservancy is also working with the adjoining landowner, the Ventura County Game Preserve, and the Point Mugu Naval Air Station. The Oxnard Public Works Agency, the Calleguas Municipal Water District, and the Camrosa Water District have all offered to work with the Conservancy to provide surplus water for the wetlands restoration if it meets project water quality and supply needs.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

The certified Ventura County Local Coastal Plan (LCP) and certified City of Oxnard LCP identify the Ormond Beach project areas as a sensitive natural area requiring public action to resolve existing or potential resource problems.

ORMOND BEACH Wetlands Watcher

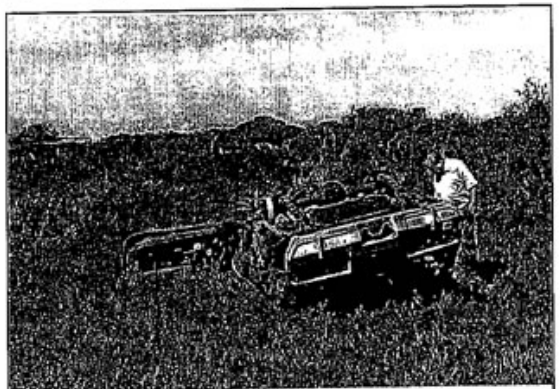
Ormond Beach Wetlands Restoration Project

Issue no. 01, summer 2003

A periodic publication of Ormond Beach Wetlands Restoration Project

Coastal Conservancy launches wetland restoration plan

Hydrology to guide project design; Wishtoyo to kick off restoration with site clean-up



CAR CARCASS. Efren Gorre, manager of Oxnard City Corps, examines the first target of the wetland restoration project, to be removed by City crews. Debris like this displaces endangered plant habitat and attracts trouble.

OXNARD, VENTURA COUNTY – After 20 years of community attention, and slightly more than a year after California State Coastal Conservancy preserved its first 265 acres of beachfront property, ecological restoration of the Ormond Beach wetlands will kick off on 28 August 2003 through a clean-up project to haul away some of the most conspicuous debris. Wishtoyo Foundation will join Oxnard City Corps, a youth services agency, to remove several junk cars, broken concrete, old tires, and other nuisances that have blighted the beach and surrounding coastal wetlands and endangered species habitat.

On 14 August 2003, the Coastal Conservancy Board approved expenditure of up to $600,000 to prepare a comprehensive wetland restoration plan for the area. Aspen Environmental Group, a local consulting firm based in Agoura Hills, was selected to prepare the plan with assistance from other firms that are statewide experts in wetland hydrology and ecology.

"I'm just thrilled this plan is finally coming together."
–ROMA ARMBRUST

"The goal is to restore at least 750 acres of wetlands," noted Peter Brand, the Conservancy's project manager for Ormond Beach.

Roma Armbrust, a leading citizen advocate for preservation and restoration of the Ormond Beach wetlands, added a local perspective: "I'm just thrilled this plan is finally coming together," she exclaimed.

Conservancy officials point out that their wetland plan will coordinate closely with local water reclamation efforts, such as the City of Oxnard's groundwater treatment program, called GREAT.

"One opportunity to collaborate is with Oxnard's urban runoff treatment wetlands they are now proposing to the State Water Board," Brand indicated. "As for GREAT, our study will include a water quality analysis so see if that brackish water is compatible with the wetlands we restore just downhill toward the beach," he explained.

The Coastal Conservancy's wetland restoration plan will begin in September 2003 and take about 18 months to complete. The plan will be guided primarily by opportunities and constraints for establishing optimal wetland hydrology. It will investigate possible tidal connections with the ocean and additional retention of surface and groundwater flows from the Oxnard Plain watershed.

Expansion and improvement of wildlife habitat also will be a major goal, authorities say, along with providing public education and visitor access pathways where compatible with the sensitive wetlands and wildlife in the area. Of special concern are potential disturbances to the endangered birds –California Least Tern and Western Snowy Plover– that nest on the beach during the spring and summer.

Based on 1855 coastal survey maps, the Ormond Beach wetlands once extended as far inland as Hueneme Road and covered thousands of acres. To restore some of that heritage, the Conservancy is negotiating with City of Oxnard and Metropolitan Water District to acquire an additional 309 acres of existing and restorable wetlands. That 309-acre site is contiguous with the Conservancy's first 265-acre property acquisition surrounding the Reliant Energy power plant. ##

photo courtesy Larry Wan

PAPA PLOVER. Male western snowy plovers –a threatened species– do most of the brood care. This Ormond Beach father protects his egg and chick.

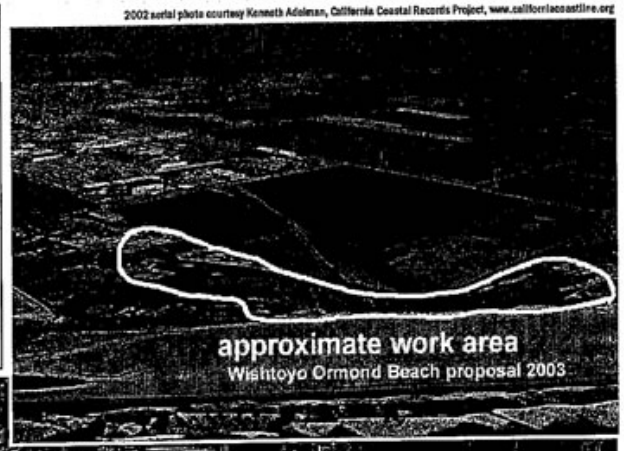
How to help and participate

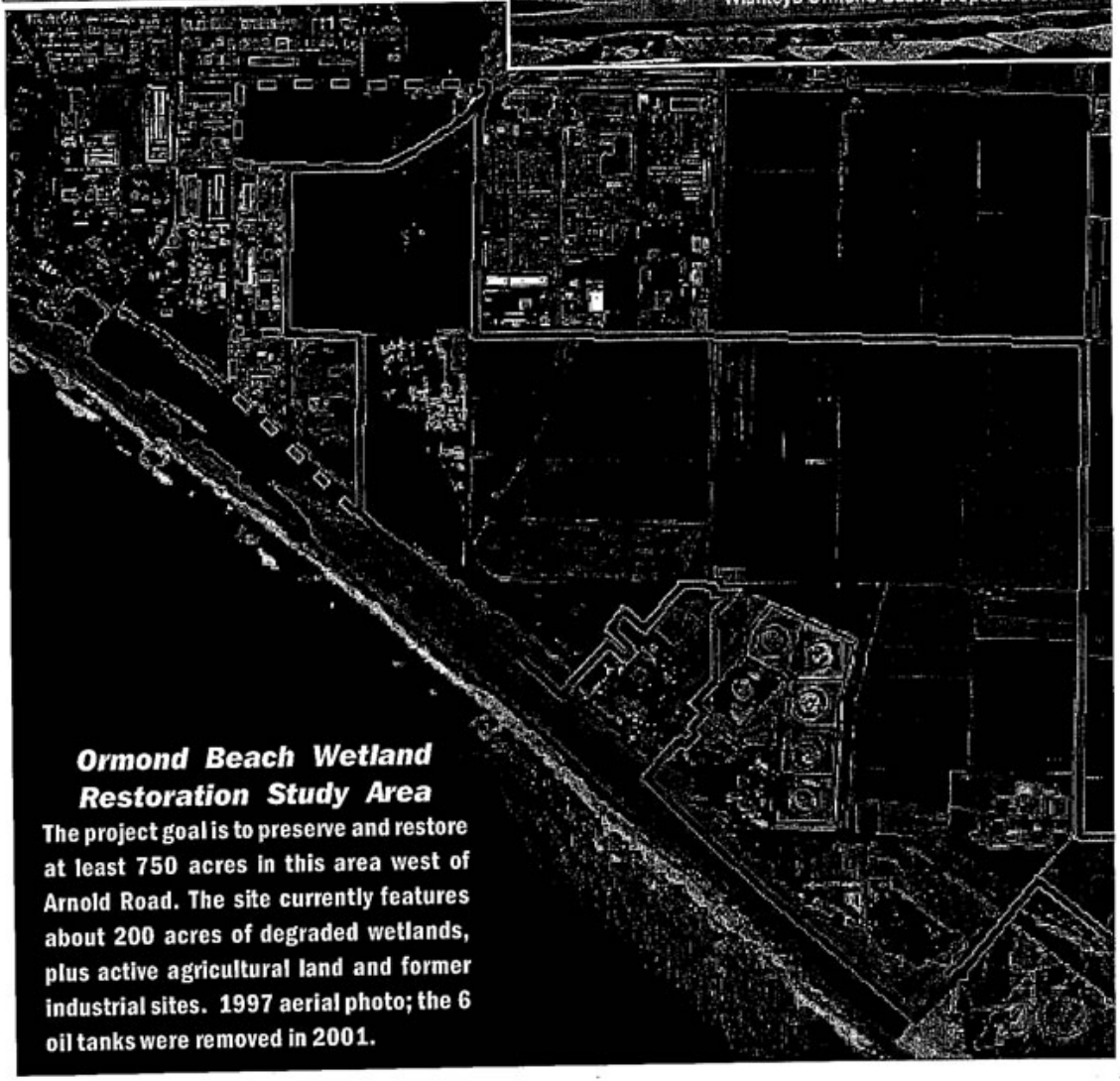
ORMOND BEACH WILDLIFE PATROL needs volunteers to help with seasonal fencing around the endangered least tern nesting colony and snowy plover nests, as well as watching for off-road vehicles and other illegal beach uses. Call 805-488-7988 to learn more. See also www.wanconservancy.org

GREATER ORMOND BEACH TASK FORCE meets monthly to discuss all issues Ormond, including updates on the wetland restoration plan. Email bmicali@quixnet.net for notices.

Ormond Beach *Wetlands Watcher* is supported by California State Coastal Conservancy (www.scc.ca.gov) and edited by David Pritchett (dapritch@cox.net). Peter Brand is the Conservancy's project manager (brand@scc.ca.gov).

2002 aerial photo courtesy Kenneth Adelman, California Coastal Records Project, www.californiacoastline.org





Ormond Beach Wetland Restoration Study Area

The project goal is to preserve and restore at least 750 acres in this area west of Arnold Road. The site currently features about 200 acres of degraded wetlands, plus active agricultural land and former industrial sites. 1997 aerial photo; the 6 oil tanks were removed in 2001.